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Saltbush Bill, J.P., and Other Verses

By A. B. Paterson

April, 1998 [Etext #1317]

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Saltbush Bill, J.P., and Other Verses

By A. B. Paterson

[Andrew Barton ("Banjo") Paterson, Australian poet & journalist. 1864-1941.]

[Note on text: Italicized lines and stanzas are marked by tildes (~).
Italicized words or phrases are CAPITALISED. Lines longer than 78 characters
are broken and the continuation is indented two spaces. Some obvious errors
have been corrected (see Notes).]

Saltbush Bill, J.P., and Other Verses

By A. B. Paterson

Author of "The Man from Snowy River, and Other Verses",
"Rio Grande, and Other Verses", and "An Outback Marriage".

Note

Major A. B. Paterson has been on active service in Egypt
for the past eighteen months. The publishers feel it incumbent on them to say
that only a few of the pieces in this volume have been seen by him in proof;
and that he is not responsible for the selection, the arrangement or the title
of "Saltbush Bill, J.P., and Other Verses".

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Saltbush Bill, J.P., and Other Verses

~Song of the Pen

Not for the love of women toil we, we of the craft,
Not for the people's praise;
Only because our goddess made us her own and laughed,
Claiming us all our days,

Claiming our best endeavour -- body and heart and brain
Given with no reserve --
Niggard is she towards us, granting us little gain;
Still, we are proud to serve.

Not unto us is given choice of the tasks we try,
Gathering grain or chaff;
One of her favoured servants toils at an epic high,
One, that a child may laugh.

Yet if we serve her truly in our appointed place,
Freely she doth accord
Unto her faithful servants always this saving grace,
Work is its own reward!~

Song of the Wheat

We have sung the song of the droving days,
Of the march of the travelling sheep;
By silent stages and lonely ways
Thin, white battalions creep.

But the man who now by the land would thrive
Must his spurs to a plough-share beat.
Is there ever a man in the world alive
To sing the song of the Wheat!

It's west by south of the Great Divide
The grim grey plains run out,
Where the old flock-masters lived and died
In a ceaseless fight with drought.
Weary with waiting and hope deferred
They were ready to own defeat,
Till at last they heard the master-word --
And the master-word was Wheat.

Yarran and Myall and Box and Pine --
'Twas axe and fire for all;
They scarce could tarry to blaze the line
Or wait for the trees to fall,
Ere the team was yoked, and the gates flung wide,
And the dust of the horses' feet
Rose up like a pillar of smoke to guide
The wonderful march of Wheat.

Furrow by furrow, and fold by fold,
The soil is turned on the plain;
Better than silver and better than gold
Is the surface-mine of the grain;
Better than cattle and better than sheep
In the fight with drought and heat;
For a streak of stubbornness, wide and deep,
Lies hid in a grain of Wheat.

When the stock is swept by the hand of fate,
Deep down in his bed of clay
The brave brown Wheat will lie and wait
For the resurrection day:
Lie hid while the whole world thinks him dead;
But the Spring-rain, soft and sweet,
Will over the steaming paddocks spread
The first green flush of the Wheat.

Green and amber and gold it grows
When the sun sinks late in the West;
And the breeze sweeps over the rippling rows
Where the quail and the skylark nest.
Mountain or river or shining star,
There's never a sight can beat --
Away to the sky-line stretching far --
A sea of the ripening Wheat.

When the burning harvest sun sinks low,
And the shadows stretch on the plain,
The roaring strippers come and go

Like ships on a sea of grain;
Till the lurching, groaning waggons bear
Their tale of the load complete.
Of the world's great work he has done his share
Who has gathered a crop of wheat.

Princes and Potentates and Czars,
They travel in regal state,
But old King Wheat has a thousand cars
For his trip to the water-gate;
And his thousand steamships breast the tide
And plough thro' the wind and sleet
To the lands where the teeming millions bide
That say: "Thank God for Wheat!"

Brumby's Run

Brumby is the Aboriginal word for a wild horse. At a recent trial
a N.S.W. Supreme Court Judge, hearing of Brumby horses, asked:
"Who is Brumby, and where is his Run?"

It lies beyond the Western Pines
Towards the sinking sun,
And not a survey mark defines
The bounds of "Brumby's Run".

On odds and ends of mountain land,
On tracks of range and rock
Where no one else can make a stand,
Old Brumby rears his stock.

A wild, unhandled lot they are
Of every shape and breed.
They venture out 'neath moon and star
Along the flats to feed;

But when the dawn makes pink the sky
And steals along the plain,
The Brumby horses turn and fly
Towards the hills again.

The traveller by the mountain-track
May hear their hoof-beats pass,
And catch a glimpse of brown and black
Dim shadows on the grass.

The eager stockhorse pricks his ears
And lifts his head on high

In wild excitement when he hears
The Brumby mob go by.

Old Brumby asks no price or fee
O'er all his wide domains:
The man who yards his stock is free
To keep them for his pains.

So, off to scour the mountain-side
With eager eyes aglow,
To strongholds where the wild mobs hide
The gully-rakers go.

A rush of horses through the trees,
A red shirt making play;
A sound of stockwhips on the breeze,
They vanish far away!

.

Ah, me! before our day is done
We long with bitter pain
To ride once more on Brumby's Run
And yard his mob again.

Saltbush Bill on the Patriarchs

Come all you little rouseabouts and climb upon my knee;
To-day, you see, is Christmas Day, and so it's up to me
To give you some instruction like -- a kind of Christmas tale --
So name your yarn, and off she goes. What, "Jonah and the Whale"?

Well, whales is sheep I've never shore; I've never been to sea,
So all them great Leviathans is mysteries to me;
But there's a tale the Bible tells I fully understand,
About the time the Patriarchs were settling on the land.

Those Patriarchs of olden time, when all is said and done,
They lived the same as far-out men on many a Queensland run --
A lot of roving, droving men who drifted to and fro,
The same we did out Queensland way a score of years ago.

Now Isaac was a squatter man, and Jacob was his son,
And when the boy grew up, you see, he wearied of the run.
You know the way that boys grow up -- there's some that stick at home;
But any boy that's worth his salt will roll his swag and roam.

So Jacob caught the roving fit and took the drovers' track

To where his uncle had a run, beyond the outer back;
You see they made for out-back runs for room to stretch and grow,
The same we did out Queensland way, a score of years ago.

Now, Jacob knew the ways of stock -- that's most uncommon clear --
For when he got to Laban's Run, they made him overseer;
He didn't ask a pound a week, but bargained for his pay
To take the roan and strawberry calves -- the same we'd take to-day.

The duns and blacks and "Goulburn roans" (that's brindles), coarse and hard,
He branded them with Laban's brand, in Old Man Laban's yard;
So, when he'd done the station work for close on seven year,
Why, all the choicest stock belonged to Laban's overseer.

It's often so with overseers -- I've seen the same thing done
By many a Queensland overseer on many a Queensland run.
But when the mustering time came on old Laban acted straight,
And gave him country of his own outside the boundary gate.

He gave him stock, and offered him his daughter's hand in troth;
And Jacob first he married one, and then he married both;
You see, they weren't particular about a wife or so --
No more were we up Queensland way a score of years ago.

But when the stock were strong and fat with grass and lots of rain,
Then Jacob felt the call to take the homeward road again.
It's strange in every creed and clime, no matter where you roam,
There comes a day when every man would like to make for home.

So off he set with sheep and goats, a mighty moving band,
To battle down the homeward track along the Overland --
It's droving mixed-up mobs like that that makes men cut their throats.
I've travelled rams, which Lord forget, but never travelled goats.

But Jacob knew the ways of stock, for (so the story goes)
When battling through the Philistines -- selectors, I suppose --
He thought he'd have to fight his way, an awkward sort of job;
So what did Old Man Jacob do? of course, he split the mob.

He sent the strong stock on ahead to battle out the way;
He couldn't hurry lambing ewes -- no more you could to-day --
And down the road, from run to run, his hand 'gainst every hand,
He moved that mighty mob of stock across the Overland.

The thing is made so clear and plain, so solid in and out,
There isn't any room at all for any kind of doubt.
It's just a plain straightforward tale -- a tale that lets you know
The way they lived in Palestine three thousand years ago.

It's strange to read it all to-day, the shifting of the stock;
You'd think you see the caravans that loaf behind the flock,
The little donkeys and the mules, the sheep that slowly spread,
And maybe Dan or Naphthali a-ridin' on ahead.

The long, dry, dusty summer days, the smouldering fires at night;
The stir and bustle of the camp at break of morning light;
The little kids that skipped about, the camels' dead-slow tramp --
I wish I'd done a week or two in Old Man Jacob's camp!

~But if I keep the narrer path, some day, perhaps, I'll know
How Jacob bred them strawberry calves three thousand years ago.~

The Reverend Mullineux

I'd reckon his weight at eight-stun-eight,
And his height at five-foot-two,
With a face as plain as an eight-day clock
And a walk as brisk as a bantam-cock --
Game as a bantam, too,
Hard and wiry and full of steam,
That's the boss of the English Team,
Reverend Mullineux.

Makes no row when the game gets rough --
None of your "Strike me blue!"
"You's wants smacking across the snout!"
Plays like a gentleman out-and-out --
Same as he ought to do.
"Kindly remove from off my face!"
That's the way that he states his case --
Reverend Mullineux.

Kick! He can kick like an army mule --
Run like a kangaroo!
Hard to get by as a lawyer-plant,
Tackles his man like a bull-dog ant --
Fetches him over too!
DIDN'T the public cheer and shout
Watchin' him chuckin' big blokes about --
Reverend Mullineux.

Scrimmage was packed on his prostrate form,
Somehow the ball got through --
Who was it tackled our big half-back,
Flinging him down like an empty sack,
Right on our goal-line too?
Who but the man that we thought was dead,
Down with a score of 'em on his head,
Reverend Mullineux.

The Wisdom of Hafiz

My son, if you go to the races to battle with Ikey and Mo,
Remember, it's seldom the pigeon can pick out the eye of the crow;
Remember, they live by the business; remember, my son, and go slow.

If ever an owner should tell you, "Back mine" -- don't you be such a flat.
He knows his own cunning, no doubt -- does he know what the others are at?
Find out what he's frightened of most, and invest a few dollars on that.

Walk not in the track of the trainer, nor hang round the rails at his stall.
His wisdom belongs to his patron -- shall he give it to one and to all?
When the stable is served he may tell you -- and his words
are like jewels let fall.

Run wide of the tipster who whispers that Borak is sure to be first,
He tells the next mug that he corners a tale with the placings reversed;
And, remember, of judges of racing, the jockey's the absolute worst.

When they lay three to one on the field, and the runners are twenty-and-two,
Take a pull on yourself; take a pull -- it's a mighty big field
to get through.
Is the club handicapper a fool? If a fool is about, p'raps it's you!

Beware of the critic who tells you the handicap's absolute rot,
For this is chucked in, and that's hopeless, and somebody ought to be shot.
How is it he can't make a fortune himself when he knows such a lot?

From tipsters, and jockeys, and trials, and gallops, the glory has gone,
For this is the wisdom of Hafiz that sages have pondered upon,
"The very best tip in the world is to see the commission go on!"

Saltbush Bill, J.P.

Beyond the land where Leichhardt went,
Beyond Sturt's Western track,
The rolling tide of change has sent
Some strange J.P.s out back.

And Saltbush Bill, grown old and grey,
And worn with want of sleep,
Received the news in camp one day
Behind the travelling sheep

That Edward Rex, confiding in
His known integrity,
By hand and seal on parchment skin
Had made him a J.P.

He read the news with eager face
But found no word of pay.
"I'd like to see my sister's place
And kids on Christmas day.

"I'd like to see green grass again,
And watch clear water run,
Away from this unholy plain,
And flies, and dust, and sun."

At last one little clause he found
That might some hope inspire,
"A magistrate may charge a pound
For inquest on a fire."

A big blacks' camp was built close by,
And Saltbush Bill, says he,
"I think that camp might well supply
A job for a J.P."

That night, by strange coincidence,
A most disastrous fire
Destroyed the country residence
Of Jacky Jack, Esquire.

'Twas mostly leaves, and bark, and dirt;
The party most concerned
Appeared to think it wouldn't hurt
If forty such were burned.

Quite otherwise thought Saltbush Bill,
Who watched the leaping flame.
"The home is small," said he, "but still
The principle's the same.

"Midst palaces though you should roam,
Or follow pleasure's tracks,
You'll find," he said, "no place like home,
At least like Jacky Jack's.

"Tell every man in camp 'Come quick,'
Tell every black Maria
I give tobacco half a stick --
Hold inquest long-a fire."

Each juryman received a name
Well suited to a Court.
"Long Jack" and "Stumpy Bill" became

"John Long" and "William Short".

While such as "Tarpot", "Bullock Dray",
And "Tommy Wait-a-While",
Became, for ever and a day,
"Scott", "Dickens", and "Carlyle".

And twelve good sable men and true
Were soon engaged upon
The conflagration that o'erthrew
The home of John A. John.

Their verdict, "Burnt by act of Fate",
They scarcely had returned
When, just behind the magistrate,
Another humpy burned!

The jury sat again and drew
Another stick of plug.
Said Saltbush Bill, "It's up to you
Put some one long-a Jug."

"I'll camp the sheep," he said, "and sift
The evidence about."
For quite a week he couldn't shift,
The way the fires broke out.

The jury thought the whole concern
As good as any play.
They used to "take him oath" and earn
Three sticks of plug a day.

At last the tribe lay down to sleep
Homeless, beneath a tree;
And onward with his travelling sheep
Went Saltbush Bill, J.P.

The sheep delivered, safe and sound,
His horse to town he turned,
And drew some five-and-twenty pound
For fees that he had earned.

And where Monaro's ranges hide
Their little farms away --
His sister's children by his side --
He spent his Christmas Day.

The next J.P. that went out back
Was shocked, or pained, or both,
At hearing every pagan black
Repeat the juror's oath.

No matter though he turned and fled

They followed faster still;
"You make it inkwich, boss," they said,
"All same like Saltbush Bill."

They even said they'd let him see
The fires originate.
When he refused they said that he
Was "No good magistrate."

And out beyond Sturt's Western track,
And Leichhardt's farthest tree,
They wait till fate shall send them back
Their Saltbush Bill, J.P.

The Riders in the Stand

There's some that ride the Robbo style, and bump at every stride;
While others sit a long way back, to get a longer ride.
There's some that ride like sailors do, with legs and arms, and teeth;
And some ride on the horse's neck, and some ride underneath.

But all the finest horsemen out -- the men to Beat the Band --
You'll find amongst the crowd that ride their races in the Stand.
They'll say "He had the race in hand, and lost it in the straight."
They'll show how Godby came too soon, and Barden came too late.

They'll say Chevalley lost his nerve, and Regan lost his head;
They'll tell how one was "livened up" and something else was "dead" --
In fact, the race was never run on sea, or sky, or land,
But what you'd get it better done by riders in the Stand.

The rule holds good in everything in life's uncertain fight;
You'll find the winner can't go wrong, the loser can't go right.
You ride a slashing race, and lose -- by one and all you're banned!
Ride like a bag of flour, and win -- they'll cheer you in the Stand.

Waltzing Matilda

(Carrying a Swag.)

Oh! there once was a swagman camped in the Billabong,
Under the shade of a Coolabah tree;
And he sang as he looked at his old billy boiling,

"Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me."

Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda, my darling,
Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?
Waltzing Matilda and leading a water-bag --
Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?

Down came a jumbuck to drink at the water-hole,
Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him in glee;
And he sang as he put him away in his tucker-bag,
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!"

Down came the Squatter a-riding his thorough-bred;
Down came Policemen -- one, two, and three.
"Whose is the jumbuck you've got in the tucker-bag?
You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me."

But the swagman, he up and he jumped in the water-hole,
Drowning himself by the Coolabah tree;
And his ghost may be heard as it sings in the Billabong,
"Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?"

An Answer to Various Bards

Well, I've waited mighty patient while they all came rolling in,
Mister Lawson, Mister Dyson, and the others of their kin,
With their dreadful, dismal stories of the Overlander's camp,
How his fire is always smoky, and his boots are always damp;
And they paint it so terrific it would fill one's soul with gloom,
But you know they're fond of writing about "corpses" and "the tomb".
So, before they curse the bushland they should let their fancy range,
And take something for their livers, and be cheerful for a change.

Now, for instance, Mr. Lawson -- well, of course, we almost cried
At the sorrowful description how his "little 'Arvie" died,
And we lachrymosed in silence when "His Father's Mate" was slain;
Then he went and killed the father, and we had to weep again.
Ben Duggan and Jack Denver, too, he caused them to expire,
And he went and cooked the gander of Jack Dunn, of Nevertire;
So, no doubt, the bush is wretched if you judge it by the groan
Of the sad and soulful poet with a graveyard of his own.

And he spoke in terms prophetic of a revolution's heat,
When the world should hear the clamour of those people in the street;
But the shearers chaps who start it -- why, he rounds on them in blame,
And he calls 'em "agitators" who are living on the game.
But I "over-write" the bushmen! Well, I own without a doubt
That I always see a hero in the "man from furthest out".

I could never contemplate him through an atmosphere of gloom,
And a bushman never struck me as a subject for "the tomb".

If it ain't all "golden sunshine" where the "wattle branches wave",
Well, it ain't all damp and dismal, and it ain't all "lonely grave".
And, of course, there's no denying that the bushman's life is rough,
But a man can easy stand it if he's built of sterling stuff;
Tho' it's seldom that the drover gets a bed of eider-down,
Yet the man who's born a bushman, he gets mighty sick of town,
For he's jotting down the figures, and he's adding up the bills
While his heart is simply aching for a sight of Southern hills.

Then he hears a wool-team passing with a rumble and a lurch,
And, although the work is pressing, yet it brings him off his perch.
For it stirs him like a message from his station friends afar
And he seems to sniff the ranges in the scent of wool and tar;
And it takes him back in fancy, half in laughter, half in tears,
To a sound of other voices and a thought of other years,
When the woolshed rang with bustle from the dawning of the day,
And the shear-blades were a-clicking to the cry of "Wool away!"

Then his face was somewhat browner and his frame was firmer set --
And he feels his flabby muscles with a feeling of regret.
But the wool-team slowly passes, and his eyes go sadly back
To the dusty little table and the papers in the rack,
And his thoughts go to the terrace where his sickly children squall,
And he thinks there's something healthy in the bush-life after all.
But we'll go no more a-droving in the wind or in the sun,
For our fathers' hearts have failed us and the droving days are done.

There's a nasty dash of danger where the long-horned bullock wheels,
And we like to live in comfort and to get our reg'lar meals.
For to hang around the townships suits us better, you'll agree,
And a job at washing bottles is the job for such as we.
Let us herd into the cities, let us crush and crowd and push
Till we lose the love of roving and we learn to hate the bush;
And we'll turn our aspirations to a city life and beer,
And we'll slip across to England -- it's a nicer place than here;

For there's not much risk of hardship where all comforts are in store,
And the theatres are plenty and the pubs are more and more.
But that ends it, Mr. Lawson, and it's time to say good-bye,
We must agree to differ in all friendship, you and I;
So we'll work our own salvation with the stoutest hearts we may,
And if fortune only favours we will take the road some day,
And go droving down the river 'neath the sunshine and the stars,
And then return to Sydney and vermilionize the bars.

T.Y.S.O.N.

Across the Queensland border line
The mobs of cattle go;
They travel down in sun and shine
On dusty stage, and slow.
The drovers, riding slowly on
To let the cattle spread,
Will say: "Here's one old landmark gone,
For old man Tyson's dead."

What tales there'll be in every camp
By men that Tyson knew;
The swagmen, meeting on the tramp,
Will yarn the long day through,
And tell of how he passed as "Brown",
And fooled the local men:
"But not for me -- I struck the town,
And passed the message further down;
That's T.Y.S.O.N.!"

There stands a little country town
Beyond the border line,
Where dusty roads go up and down,
And banks with pubs combine.
A stranger came to cash a cheque --
Few were the words he said --
A handkerchief about his neck,
An old hat on his head.

A long grey stranger, eagle-eyed --
"Know me? Of course you do?"
"It's not my work," the boss replied,
"To know such tramps as you."
"Well, look here, Mister, don't be flash,"
Replied the stranger then,
"I never care to make a splash,
I'm simple -- but I've got the cash,
I'm T.Y.S.O.N."

But in that last great drafting-yard,
Where Peter keeps the gate,
And souls of sinners find it barred,
And go to meet their fate,
There's one who ought to enter in,
For good deeds done on earth;
Such deeds as merit ought to win,
Kind deeds of sterling worth.

Not by the strait and narrow gate,
Reserved for wealthy men,
But through the big gate, opened wide,
The grizzled figure, eagle-eyed,

Will travel through -- and then
Old Peter'll say: "We pass him through;
There's many a thing he used to do,
Good-hearted things that no one knew;
That's T.Y.S.O.N."

As Long as your Eyes are Blue

Wilt thou love me, sweet, when my hair is grey
And my cheeks shall have lost their hue?
When the charms of youth shall have passed away,
Will your love as of old prove true?

For the looks may change, and the heart may range,
And the love be no longer fond;
Wilt thou love with truth in the years of youth
And away to the years beyond?

Oh, I love you, sweet, for your locks of brown
And the blush on your cheek that lies --
But I love you most for the kindly heart
That I see in your sweet blue eyes.

For the eyes are signs of the soul within,
Of the heart that is leal and true,
And mine own sweetheart, I shall love you still,
Just as long as your eyes are blue.

For the locks may bleach, and the cheeks of peach
May be reft of their golden hue;
But mine own sweetheart, I shall love you still,
Just as long as your eyes are blue.

Bottle-O!

I ain't the kind of bloke as takes to any steady job;
I drives me bottle cart around the town;
A bloke what keeps 'is eyes about can always make a bob --
I couldn't bear to graft for every brown.
There's lots of handy things about in everybody's yard,
There's cocks and hens a-runnin' to an' fro,
And little dogs what comes and barks -- we take 'em off their guard
And we puts 'em with the Empty Bottle-O!

Chorus --

So it's any "Empty bottles! Any empty bottle-O!"
You can hear us round for a half a mile or so.
And you'll see the women rushing
To take in the Monday's washing
When they 'ear us crying, "Empty Bottle-O!"

I'm drivin' down by Wexford-street and up a winder goes,
A girl sticks out 'er 'ead and looks at me,
An all-right tart with ginger 'air, and freckles on 'er nose;
I stops the cart and walks across to see.
"There ain't no bottles 'ere," says she, "since father took the pledge;"
"No bottles 'ere," says I, "I'd like to know
What right you 'ave to stick your 'ead outside the winder ledge,
If you 'aven't got no Empty Bottle-O!"

I sometimes gives the 'orse a spell, and then the push and me
We takes a little trip to Chowder Bay.
Oh! ain't it nice the 'ole day long a-gazin' at the sea
And a-hidin' of the tanglefoot away.
But when the booze gits 'old of us, and fellows starts to "scrap",
There's some what likes blue-metal for to throw:
But as for me, I always says for layin' out a "trap"
There's nothin' like an Empty Bottle-O!

The Story of Mongrel Grey

This is the story the stockman told,
On the cattle camp, when the stars were bright;
The moon rose up like a globe of gold
And flooded the plain with her mellow light.
We watched the cattle till dawn of day
And he told me the story of Mongrel Grey.

.

He was a knock-about station hack,
Spurred and walloped, and banged and beat;
Ridden all day with a sore on his back,
Left all night with nothing to eat.
That was a matter of every-day
Common occurrence to Mongrel Grey.

We might have sold him, but someone heard
He was bred out back on a flooded run,
Where he learnt to swim like a waterbird, --

Midnight or midday were all as one.
In the flooded ground he could find his way,
Nothing could puzzle old Mongrel Grey.

'Tis a special gift that some horses learn;
When the floods are out they will splash along
In girth-deep water, and twist and turn
From hidden channel and billabong.
Never mistaking the road to go,
For a man may guess -- but the horses KNOW.

I was camping out with my youngest son --
Bit of a nipper just learnt to speak --
In an empty hut on the lower run,
Shooting and fishing in Conroy's Creek.
The youngster toddled about all day,
And with our horses was Mongrel Grey.

All of a sudden the flood came down
Fresh from the hills with the mountain rain,
Roaring and eddying, rank and brown,
Over the flats and across the plain.
Rising and rising -- at fall of night
Nothing but water appeared in sight!

'Tis a nasty place when the floods are out,
Even in daylight; for all around
Channels and billabongs twist about,
Stretching for miles in the flooded ground.
And to move was a hopeless thing to try
In the dark with the water just racing by.

I had to try it. I heard a roar,
And the wind swept down with the blinding rain;
And the water rose till it reached the floor
Of our highest room, and 'twas very plain
The way the water was sweeping down
We must shift for the highlands at once, or drown.

Off to the stable I splashed, and found
The horses shaking with cold and fright;
I led them down to the lower ground,
But never a yard would they swim that night!
They reared and snorted and turned away,
And none would face it but Mongrel Grey.

I bound the child on the horse's back,
And we started off with a prayer to heaven,
Through the rain and the wind and the pitchy black,
For I knew that the instinct God has given
To guide His creatures by night and day
Would lead the footsteps of Mongrel Grey.

He struck deep water at once and swam --
I swam beside him and held his mane --
Till we touched the bank of the broken dam
In shallow water -- then off again,
Swimming in darkness across the flood,
Rank with the smell of the drifting mud.

He turned and twisted across and back,
Choosing the places to wade or swim,
Picking the safest and shortest track,
The pitchy darkness was clear to him.
Did he strike the crossing by sight or smell?
The Lord that led him alone could tell!

He dodged the timber whene'er he could,
But the timber brought us to grief at last;
I was partly stunned by a log of wood,
That struck my head as it drifted past;
And I lost my grip of the brave old grey,
And in half a second he swept away.

I reached a tree, where I had to stay,
And did a perish for two days hard;
And lived on water -- but Mongrel Grey,
He walked right into the homestead yard
At dawn next morning, and grazed around,
With the child on top of him safe and sound.

We keep him now for the wife to ride,
Nothing too good for him now, of course;
Never a whip on his fat old hide,
For she owes the child to that old grey horse.
And not Old Tyson himself could pay
The purchase money of Mongrel Grey.

Gilhooley's Estate

(A ballad concerning the amalgamation of the legal professions.)

Oh, Mr. Gilhooley he turned up his toes,
As most of us do, soon or late;
And Jones was a lawyer, as everyone knows,
So they took him Gilhooley's Estate.

Gilhooley in life had been living so free
'Twas thought his possessions were great,
So Jones, with a smile, says, "There's many a fee
For me in Gilhooley's Estate."

They made out a list of his property fine,
It totalled a thousand-and-eight;
But the debts were nine hundred and ninety and nine --
The debts of Gilhooley's Estate.

So Mrs. Gilhooley says, "Jones, my dear man,
My childer have little to ait:
Just keep the expenses as low as you can
Against poor Gilhooley's Estate."

But Jones says, "The will isn't clear in its terms,
I fear it will need some debate,
And the law won't allow me (attorneys are worms)
To appear in Gilhooley's Estate."

So a barrister-man, with a wig on his head,
And a brief in his hand quite elate,
Went up to the Court where they bury the dead,
Just to move in Gilhooley's Estate.

But his Honor the Judge said, "I think that the joint
Legatees must be called to probATE --
Ex parte Pokehorney is clear on the point --
The point of Gilhooley's Estate.

"I order a suit to be brought just to try
If this is correct that I state --
A nice friendly suit, and the costs, by and by,
Must be borne by Gilhooley's Estate."

So Mrs. Gilhooley says, "Jones, you'll appear!
Thim barristers' fees is too great;
The suit is but friendly." "Attorneys, my dear,
Can't be heard in Gilhooley's Estate."

From the Barristers' Court there's a mighty hurrah
Arises both early and late:
It's only the whoop of the Junior Bar
Dividing Gilhooley's Estate.

The Road to Hogan's Gap

Now look, you see, it's this way like,
You cross the broken bridge
And run the crick down till you strike
The second right-hand ridge.

The track is hard to see in parts,
But still it's pretty clear;
There's been two Injin hawkers' carts
Along that road this year.

Well, run that right-hand ridge along --
It ain't, to say, too steep --
There's two fresh tracks might put you wrong
Where blokes went out with sheep.

But keep the crick upon your right,
And follow pretty straight
Along the spur, until you sight
A wire and sapling gate.

Well, that's where Hogan's old grey mare
Fell off and broke her back;
You'll see her carcass layin' there,
Jist down below the track.

And then you drop two mile, or three,
It's pretty steep and blind;
You want to go and fall a tree
And tie it on behind.

And then you pass a broken cart
Below a granite bluff;
And that is where you strike the part
They reckon pretty rough.

But by the time you've got that far
It's either cure or kill,
So turn your horses round the spur
And face 'em up the hill.

For look, if you should miss the slope
And get below the track,
You haven't got the whitest hope
Of ever gettin' back.

An' half way up you'll see the hide
Of Hogan's brindled bull;
Well, mind and keep the right-hand side,
The left's too steep a pull.

And both the banks is full of cracks;
An' just about at dark
You'll see the last year's bullock tracks
Where Hogan drew the bark.

The marks is old and pretty faint
And grown with scrub and such;
Of course the track to Hogan's ain't

A road that's travelled much.

But turn and run the tracks along
For half a mile or more,
And then, of course, you can't go wrong --
You're right at Hogan's door.

When first you come to Hogan's gate
He mightn't show, perhaps;
He's pretty sure to plant and wait
To see it ain't the traps.

I wouldn't call it good enough
To let your horses out;
There's some that's pretty extra rough
Is livin' round about.

It's likely if your horses did
Get feedin' near the track,
It's goin' to cost at least a quid
Or more to get them back.

So, if you find they're off the place,
It's up to you to go
And flash a quid in Hogan's face --
He'll know the blokes that know.

But listen, if you're feelin' dry,
Just see there's no one near,
And go and wink the other eye
And ask for ginger beer.

The blokes come in from near and far
To sample Hogan's pop;
They reckon once they breast the bar
They stay there till they drop.

On Sundays you can see them spread
Like flies around the tap.
It's like that song "The Livin' Dead"
Up there at Hogan's Gap.

They like to make it pretty strong
Whenever there's a charnce;
So when a stranger comes along
They always holds a darnce.

There's recitations, songs, and fights --
A willin' lot you'll meet.
There's one long bloke up there recites,
I tell you -- he's a treat.

They're lively blokes all right up there,

It's never dull a day.
I'd go meself if I could spare
The time to get away.

.

The stranger turned his horses quick.
He didn't cross the bridge;
He didn't go along the crick
To strike the second ridge;

He didn't make the trip, because
He wasn't feeling fit.
His business up at Hogan's was
To serve him with a writ.

He reckoned if he faced the pull
And climbed the rocky stair,
The next to come might find his hide
A land-mark on the mountain side,
Along with Hogan's brindled bull
And Hogan's old grey mare!

A Singer of the Bush

There is waving of grass in the breeze
And a song in the air,
And a murmur of myriad bees
That toil everywhere.
There is scent in the blossom and bough,
And the breath of the Spring
Is as soft as a kiss on a brow --
And Spring-time I sing.

There is drought on the land, and the stock
Tumble down in their tracks
Or follow -- a tottering flock --
The scrub-cutter's axe.
While ever a creature survives
The axes shall swing;
We are fighting with fate for their lives --
And the combat I sing.

"Shouting" for a Camel

It was over at Coolgardie that a mining speculator,
Who was going down the township just to make a bit o' chink,
Went off to hire a camel from a camel propagator,
And the Afghan said he'd lend it if he'd stand the beast a drink.
Yes, the only price he asked him was to stand the beast a drink.
He was cheap, very cheap, as the dromedaries go.

So the mining speculator made the bargain, proudly thinking
He had bested old Mahomet, he had done him in the eye.
Then he clambered on the camel, and the while the beast was drinking
He explained with satisfaction to the miners standing by
That 'twas cheap, very cheap, as the dromedaries go.

But the camel kept on drinking and he filled his hold with water,
And the more he had inside him yet the more he seemed to need;
For he drank it by the gallon, and his girths grew taut and tauter,
And the miners muttered softly, "Yes, he's very dry indeed!
But he's cheap, very cheap, as the dromedaries go."

So he drank up twenty buckets -- it was weird to watch him suck it,
(And the market price for water was per bucket half-a-crown)
Till the speculator stopped him, saying, "Not another bucket --
If I give him any more there'll be a famine in the town.
Take him back to old Mahomet, and I'll tramp it through the town."
He was cheap, very cheap, as the speculators go.

There's a moral to this story -- in your hat you ought to paste it,
Be careful whom you shout for when a camel is about,
And there's plenty human camels who, before they'll see you waste it,
Will drink up all you pay for if you're fool enough to shout;
If you chance to strike a camel when you're fool enough to shout,
You'll be cheap, very cheap, as the speculators go.

The Lost Drink

I had spent the night in the watch-house --
My head was the size of three --
So I went and asked the chemist
To fix up a drink for me;
And he brewed it from various bottles
With soda and plenty of ice,
With something that smelt like lemon,
And something that seemed like spice.

It fell on my parching palate
Like the dew on a sun-baked plain,

And my system began to flourish
Like the grass in a soft spring rain;
It wandered throughout my being,
Suffusing my soul with rest,
And I felt as I "scoffed" that liquid
That life had a new-found zest.

I have been on the razzle-dazzle
Full many a time since then
But I never could get the chemist
To brew me that drink again.
He says he's forgotten the notion --
'Twas only by chance it came --
He's tried me with various liquids
But oh! they are not the same.

We have sought, but we sought it vainly,
That one lost drink divine;
We have sampled his various bottles,
But somehow they don't combine:
Yet I know when I cross the River
And stand on the Golden Shore
I shall meet with an angel-chemist
Who'll brew me that drink once more.

Mulligan's Mare

Oh, Mulligan's bar was the deuce of a place
To drink and to fight, and to gamble and race;
The height of choice spirits from near and from far
Were all concentrated on Mulligan's bar.

There was "Jerry the Swell", and the jockey-boy Ned,
"Dog-bite-me" -- so called from the shape of his head --
And a man whom the boys, in their musical slang,
Designed as the "Gaffer of Mulligan's Gang".

Now Mulligan's Gang had a racer to show,
A bad 'un to look at, a good 'un to go;
Whenever they backed her you safely might swear
She'd walk in a winner, would Mulligan's mare.

But Mulligan, having some radical views,
Neglected his business and got on the booze;
He took up with runners -- a treacherous troop --
Who gave him away and he "fell in the soup".

And so it turned out on a fine summer day,

A bailiff turned up with a writ of "fi. fa."
He walked to the bar with a manner serene,
"I levy," said he, "in the name of the Queen."

Then Mulligan wanted, in spite of the law,
To pay out the bailiff with "ONE on the jaw";
He drew out to hit him, but, ere you could wink,
He changed his intentions and stood him a drink.

A great consultation there straightway befel
'Twixt jockey-boy Neddy and Jerry the Swell,
And the man with the head, who remarked "Why, you bet!
Dog-bite-me!" said he, "but we'll diddle 'em yet.

"We'll slip out the mare from her stall in a crack,
And put in her place the old broken-down hack;
The hack is so like her, I'm ready to swear
The bailiff will think he has Mulligan's mare.

"So out with the racer and in with the screw,
We'll show him what Mulligan's talent can do;
And if he gets nasty and dares to say much,
I'll knock him as stiff as my grandmother's crutch."

Then off to the town went the mare and the lad;
The bailiff came out, never dreamt he was "had";
But marched to the stall with a confident air --
"I levy," said he, "upon Mulligan's mare."

He watched her by day and he watched her by night,
She was never an instant let out of his sight,
For races were coming away in the West
And Mulligan's mare had a chance with the best.

"Here's a chance," thought the bailiff, "to serve my own ends,
I'll send off a wire to my bookmaking friends:
Get all you can borrow, beg, snavel or snare
And lay the whole lot against Mulligan's mare."

The races came round, and a crowd on the course
Were laying the mare till they made themselves hoarse,
And Mulligan's party, with ardour intense,
They backed her for pounds and for shillings and pence.

And think of the grief of the bookmaking host
At the sound of the summons to go to the post --
For down to the start with her thorough-bred air
As fit as a fiddle pranced Mulligan's mare!

They started, and off went the boy to the front,
He cleared out at once, and he made it a hunt;
He steadied as rounding the corner they wheeled,
Then gave her her head and she smothered the field.

The race put her owner right clear of his debts,
He landed a fortune in stakes and in bets,
He paid the old bailiff the whole of his pelf,
And gave him a hiding to keep for himself.

So all you bold sportsmen take warning, I pray,
Keep clear of the running, you'll find it don't pay;
For the very best rule that you'll hear in a week --
Is never to bet on a thing that can speak.

And whether you're lucky or whether you lose,
Keep clear of the cards and keep clear of the booze,
And fortune in season will answer your prayer
And send you a flyer like Mulligan's mare.

The Matrimonial Stakes

I wooed her with a steeplechase, I won her with a fall,
I made her heartstrings quiver on the flat
When the pony missed his take-off, and we crashed into the wall;
Well, she simply HAD to have me after that!

It awoke a thrill of interest when they pulled me out for dead
From beneath the shattered ruins of a horse;
And, although she LOOKED indifferent when I landed -- on my head --
In the water, it appealed to her, of course!

When I won the Flappers' Flat-race it was "all Sir Garneo",
For she praised the way I made my final run.
And she thought the riding did it -- for how COULD the poor girl know
That a monkey could have ridden it and won!

Then they "weighed me in" a winner -- it's not often that occurs!
So I didn't let my golden chances slip,
For I showed her all the blood-marks where I jabbed him with the spurs,
And the whip-strokes where I hit him with the whip.

Then I asked her if she loved me, and she seemed inclined to shirk
For a moment, so I took her by the head
(So to speak) and rushed her at it; and she seemed to like the work
When she kissed me, though she blushed a rosy red.

She's a mouth as soft as velvet, and she plenty has of heart;
I could worship every little step she takes;
And the saddling-bell is ringing, so we're going to the start,
Certain winners, for the Matrimonial Stakes!

The Mountain Squatter

Here in my mountain home,
On rugged hills and steep,
I sit and watch you come,
O Riverina Sheep!

You come from fertile plains
Where saltbush (sometimes) grows,
And flats that (when it rains)
Will blossom like the rose.

But, when the summer sun
Gleams down like burnished brass,
You have to leave your run
And hustle off for grass.

'Tis then that -- forced to roam --
You come to where I keep,
Here in my mountain home,
A boarding-house for sheep.

Around me where I sit
The wary wombat goes --
A beast of little wit,
But what he knows, he KNOWS.

The very same remark
Applies to me also;
I don't give out a spark,
But what I know, I KNOW.

My brain perhaps would show
No convolutions deep,
But anyhow I know
The way to handle sheep.

These Riverina cracks,
They do not care to ride
The half-inch hanging tracks
Along the mountain side.

Their horses shake with fear
When loosened boulders go,
With leaps, like startled deer,
Down to the gulfs below.

Their very dogs will shirk,

And drop their tails in fright
When asked to go and work
A mob that's out of sight.

My little collie pup
Works silently and wide;
You'll see her climbing up
Along the mountain side.

As silent as a fox
You'll see her come and go,
A shadow through the rocks
Where ash and messmate grow.

Then, lost to sight and sound
Behind some rugged steep,
She works her way around
And gathers up the sheep;

And, working wide and shy,
She holds them rounded up.
The cash ain't coined to buy
That little collie pup.

And so I draw a screw
For self and dog and keep
To boundary-ride for you,
O Riverina Sheep!

And when the autumn rain
Has made the herbage grow,
You travel off again,
And glad -- no doubt -- to go.

But some are left behind
Around the mountain's spread,
For those we cannot find
We put them down as dead.

But when we say adieu
And close the boarding job,
I always find a few
Fresh ear-marks in my mob.

So what with those I sell,
And what with those I keep,
You pay me pretty well,
O Riverina Sheep!

It's up to me to shout
Before we say good-bye --
"Here's to a howlin' drought
All west of Gundagai!"

Pioneers

They came of bold and roving stock that would not fixed abide;
They were the sons of field and flock since e'er they learnt to ride,
We may not hope to see such men in these degenerate years
As those explorers of the bush -- the brave old pioneers.

'Twas they who rode the trackless bush in heat and storm and drought;
'Twas they who heard the master-word that called them farther out;
'Twas they who followed up the trail the mountain cattle made,
And pressed across the mighty range where now their bones are laid.

But now the times are dull and slow, the brave old days are dead
When hardy bushmen started out, and forced their way ahead
By tangled scrub and forests grim towards the unknown west,
And spied the far-off promised land from off the range's crest.

Oh! ye that sleep in lonely graves by far-off ridge and plain,
We drink to you in silence now as Christmas comes again,
To you who fought the wilderness through rough unsettled years --
The founders of our nation's life, the brave old pioneers.

Santa Claus in the Bush

It chanced out back at the Christmas time,
When the wheat was ripe and tall,
A stranger rode to the farmer's gate --
A sturdy man and a small.

"Rin doon, rin doon, my little son Jack,
And bid the stranger stay;
And we'll hae a crack for Auld Lang Syne,
For the morn is Christmas Day."

"Nay now, nay now," said the dour good-wife,
"But ye should let him be;
He's maybe only a drover chap
Frae the land o' the Darling Pea.

"Wi' a drover's tales, and a drover's thirst
To swiggle the hail nicht through;
Or he's maybe a life assurance carle

To talk ye black and blue."

"Guid wife, he's never a drover chap,
For their swags are neat and thin;
And he's never a life assurance carle,
Wi' the brick-dust burnt in his skin.

"Guid wife, guid wife, be nae sae dour,
For the wheat stands ripe and tall,
And we shore a seven-pound fleece this year,
Ewes and weaners and all.

"There is grass tae spare, and the stock are fat
Where they whiles are gaunt and thin,
And we owe a tithe to the travelling poor,
So we maun ask him in.

"Ye can set him a chair tae the table side,
And gi' him a bite tae eat;
An omelette made of a new-laid egg,
Or a tasty bit of meat."

"But the native cats hae taen the fowls,
They havena left a leg;
And he'll get nae omelette here at a'
Till the emu lays an egg!"

"Rin doon, rin doon, my little son Jack,
To whaur the emus bide,
Ye shall find the auld hen on the nest,
While the auld cock sits beside.

"But speak them fair, and speak them soft,
Lest they kick ye a fearsome jolt.
Ye can gi' them a feed of thae half-inch nails
Or a rusty carriage bolt."

So little son Jack ran blithely down,
With the rusty nails in hand,
Till he came where the emus fluffed and scratched
By their nest in the open sand.

And there he has gathered the new-laid egg,
'Twould feed three men or four,
And the emus came for the half-inch nails
Right up to the settler's door.

"A waste o' food," said the dour good-wife,
As she took the egg, with a frown,
"But he gets nae meat, unless ye rin
A paddy-melon down."

"Gae oot, gae oot, my little son Jack,

Wi' your twa-three doggies sma';
Gin ye come nae back wi' a paddy-melon,
Then come nae back at a'."

So little son Jack he raced and he ran,
And he was bare o' the feet,
And soon he captured a paddy-melon,
Was gorged with the stolen wheat.

"Sit doon, sit doon, my bonny wee man,
To the best that the hoose can do --
An omelette made of the emu egg
And a paddy-melon stew."

"'Tis well, 'tis well," said the bonny wee man;
"I have eaten the wide world's meat,
And the food that is given with right good will
Is the sweetest food to eat.

"But the night draws on to the Christmas Day
And I must rise and go,
For I have a mighty way to ride
To the land of the Esquimaux.

"And it's there I must load my sledges up,
With reindeers four-in-hand,
That go to the North, South, East, and West,
To every Christian land."

"Tae the Esquimaux," said the dour good-wife,
"Ye suit my husband well!
For when he gets up on his journey horse
He's a bit of a liar himsel'."

Then out with a laugh went the bonny wee man
To his old horse grazing nigh,
And away like a meteor flash they went
Far off to the Northern sky.

.

When the children woke on the Christmas morn
They chattered with might and main --
For a sword and gun had little son Jack,
And a braw new doll had Jane,
And a packet o' nails had the twa emus;
But the dour good-wife got nane.

"In Re a Gentleman, One"

When an attorney is called before the Full Court to answer
for any alleged misconduct it is not usual to publish his name
until he is found guilty; until then the matter appears in the papers
as "In re a Gentleman, One of the Attorneys of the Supreme Court",
or, more shortly, "In re a Gentleman, One".

We see it each day in the paper,
And know that there's mischief in store;
That some unprofessional caper
Has landed a shark on the shore.
We know there'll be plenty of trouble
Before they get through with the fun,
Because he's been coming the double
On clients, has "Gentleman, One".

Alas! for the gallant attorney,
Intent upon cutting a dash,
Sets out on life's perilous journey
With rather more cunning than cash.
And fortune at first is inviting --
He struts his brief hour in the sun --
But, lo! on the wall is the writing
Of Nemesis, "Gentleman, One".

For soon he runs short of the dollars,
He fears he must go to the wall;
So Peter's trust-money he collars
To pay off his creditor, Paul;
Then robs right and left -- for he goes it
In earnest when once he's begun.
Descensus Averni -- he knows it;
It's easy for "Gentleman, One".

The crash comes as sure as the seasons;
He loses his coin in a mine,
Or booming in land, or for reasons
Connected with women and wine.
Or maybe the cards or the horses
A share of the damage have done
No matter; the end of the course is
The same: "Re a Gentleman, One".

He struggles awhile to keep going,
To stave off detection and shame;
But creditors, clamorous growing,
Ere long put an end to the game.
At length the poor soldier of Satan
His course to a finish has run --
And just think of Windeyer waiting
To deal with "A Gentleman, One"!

And some face it boldly, and brazen
The shame and the utter disgrace;
While others, more sensitive, hasten
Their names and their deeds to efface.
They snap the frail thread which the Furies
And Fates have so cruelly spun.
May the great Final Judge and His juries
Have mercy on "Gentleman, One"!

The Melting of the Snow

There's a sunny Southern land,
And it's there that I would be
Where the big hills stand,
In the South Country!
When the wattles bloom again,
Then it's time for us to go
To the old Monaro country
At the melting of the snow.

To the East or to the West,
Or wherever you may be,
You will find no place
Like the South Country.
For the skies are blue above,
And the grass is green below,
In the old Monaro country
At the melting of the snow.

Now the team is in the plough,
And the thrushes start to sing,
And the pigeons on the bough
Sit a-welcoming the Spring.
So come my comrades all,
Let us saddle up and go
To the old Monaro country
At the melting of the snow.

A Dream of the Melbourne Cup

(1886)

Bring me a quart of colonial beer

And some doughy damper to make good cheer,
I must make a heavy dinner;
Heavily dine and heavily sup,
Of indigestible things fill up,
Next month they run the Melbourne Cup,
And I have to dream the winner.

Stoke it in, boys! the half-cooked ham,
The rich ragout and the charming cham.,
I've got to mix my liquor;
Give me a gander's gaunt hind leg,
Hard and tough as a wooden peg,
And I'll keep it down with a hard-boiled egg,
'Twill make me dream the quicker.

Now I am full of fearful feed,
Now I may dream a race indeed,
In my restless, troubled slumber;
While the night-mares race through my heated brain
And their devil-riders spur amain,
The tip for the Cup will reward my pain,
And I'll spot the winning number.

.

Thousands and thousands and thousands more,
Like sands on the white Pacific shore,
The crowding people cluster;
For evermore it's the story old,
While races are bought and backers are sold,
Drawn by the greed of the gain of gold,
In their thousands still they muster.

And the bookies' cries grow fierce and hot,
"I'll lay the Cup! The double, if not!"
"Five monkeys, Little John, sir!"
"Here's fives bar one, I lay, I lay!"
And so they shout through the livelong day,
And stick to the game that is sure to pay,
While fools put money on, sir!

And now in my dream I seem to go
And bet with a "book" that I seem to know --
A Hebrew money-lender;
A million to five is the price I get --
Not bad! but before I book the bet
The horse's name I clean forget,
Its number and even gender.

Now for the start, and here they come,
And the hoof-strokes roar like a mighty drum
Beat by a hand unsteady;
They come like a rushing, roaring flood,

Hurrah for the speed of the Chester blood;
For Acme is making the pace so good
There are some of 'em done already.

But round the back she begins to tire,
And a mighty shout goes up "Crossfire!"
The magpie jacket's leading;
And Crossfire challenges, fierce and bold,
And the lead she'll have and the lead she'll hold,
But at length gives way to the black and gold,
Which away to the front is speeding.

Carry them on and keep it up --
A flying race is the Melbourne Cup,
You must race and stay to win it;
And old Commotion, Victoria's pride,
Now takes the lead with his raking stride,
And a mighty roar goes far and wide --
"There's only Commotion in it!"

But one draws out from the beaten ruck
And up on the rails by a piece of luck
He comes in a style that's clever;
"It's Trident! Trident! Hurrah for Hales!"
"Go at 'em now while their courage fails;"
"Trident! Trident! for New South Wales!"
"The blue and white for ever!"

Under the whip! with the ears flat back,
Under the whip! though the sinews crack,
No sign of the base white feather;
Stick to it now for your breeding's sake,
Stick to it now though your hearts should break,
While the yells and roars make the grand-stand shake,
They come down the straight together.

Trident slowly forges ahead,
The fierce whips cut and the spurs are red,
The pace is undiminished;
Now for the Panics that never fail!
But many a backer's face grows pale
As old Commotion swings his tail
And swerves -- and the Cup is finished.

.

And now in my dream it all comes back:
I bet my coin on the Sydney crack,
A million I've won, no question!
"Give me my money, you hooked-nosed hog!
Give me my money, bookmaking dog!"
But he disappeared in a kind of fog,
And I woke with "the indigestion".

The Gundaroo Bullock

Oh, there's some that breeds the Devon that's as solid as a stone,
And there's some that breeds the brindle which they call the "Goulburn Roan";
But amongst the breeds of cattle there are very, very few
Like the hairy-whiskered bullock that they bred at Gundaroo.

Far away by Grabben Gullen, where the Murrumbidgee flows,
There's a block of broken countryside where no one ever goes;
For the banks have gripped the squatters, and the free selectors too,
And their stock are always stolen by the men of Gundaroo.

There came a low informer to the Grabben Gullen side,
And he said to Smith the squatter, "You must saddle up and ride,
For your bullock's in the harness-cask of Morgan Donahoo --
He's the greatest cattle-stealer that abides in Gundaroo."

"Oh, ho!" said Smith, the owner of the Grabben Gullen run,
"I'll go and get the troopers by the sinking of the sun,
And down into his homestead to-night we'll take a ride,
With warrants to identify the carcass and the hide."

That night rode down the troopers, the squatter at their head,
They rode into the homestead, and pulled Morgan out of bed.
"Now, show to us the carcass of the bullock that you slew --
The great marsupial bullock that you killed in Gundaroo."

They peered into the harness-cask, and found it wasn't full,
But down among the brine they saw some flesh and bits of wool.
"What's this?" exclaimed the trooper -- "an infant, I declare;"
Said Morgan, "'Tis the carcass of an old man native bear.
I heard that ye were coming, so an old man bear I slew,
Just to give you kindly welcome to my home in Gundaroo.

"The times is something awful, as you can plainly see,
The banks have broke the squatters, and they've broke the likes of me;
We can't afford a bullock -- such expense would never do --
So an old man bear for breakfast is a treat in Gundaroo."

And along by Grabben Gullen, where the rushing river flows,
In the block of broken country where there's no one ever goes,
On the Upper Murrumbidgee they're a hospitable crew,
But you mustn't ask for "bullock" when you go to Gundaroo.

Lay of the Motor-Car

We're away! and the wind whistles shrewd
In our whiskers and teeth;
And the granite-like grey of the road
Seems to slide underneath.
As an eagle might sweep through the sky,
So we sweep through the land;
And the pallid pedestrians fly
When they hear us at hand.

We outpace, we outlast, we outstrip!
Not the fast-fleeing hare,
Nor the racehorses under the whip,
Nor the birds of the air
Can compete with our swiftness sublime,
Our ease and our grace.
We annihilate chickens and time
And policemen and space.

Do you mind that fat grocer who crossed?
How he dropped down to pray
In the road when he saw he was lost;
How he melted away
Underneath, and there rang through the fog
His earsplitting squeal
As he went ---- Is that he or a dog,
That stuff on the wheel?

The Corner Man

I dreamed a dream at the midnight deep,
When fancies come and go
To vex a man in his soothing sleep
With thoughts of awful woe --
I dreamed that I was a corner-man
Of a nigger minstrel show.

I cracked my jokes, and the building rang
With laughter loud and long;
I hushed the house as I softly sang
An old plantation song --
A tale of the wicked slavery days
Of cruelty and wrong.

A small boy sat on the foremost seat --

A mirthful youngster he;
He beat the time with his restless feet
To each new melody,
And he picked me out as the brightest star
Of the black fraternity.

"Oh father," he said, "what WOULD we do
If the corner-man should die?
I never saw such a man -- did you?
He makes the people cry,
And then, when he likes, he makes them laugh."
The old man made reply --

"We each of us fill a very small space
In the great creation's plan,
If a man don't keep his lead in the race
There's plenty more that can;
The world can very soon fill the place
Of even a corner-man."

.

I woke with a jump, rejoiced to find
Myself at home in bed,
And I framed a moral in my mind
From the words the old man said.
The world will jog along just the same
When its corner-men are dead.

When Dacey Rode the Mule

'Twas to a small, up-country town,
When we were boys at school,
There came a circus with a clown,
Likewise a bucking mule.
The clown announced a scheme they had
Spectators for to bring --
They'd give a crown to any lad
Who'd ride him round the ring.

And, gentle reader, do not scoff
Nor think a man a fool --
To buck a porous-plaster off
Was pastime to that mule.

The boys got on; he bucked like sin;
He threw them in the dirt,
What time the clown would raise a grin

By asking, "Are you hurt?"
But Johnny Dacey came one night,
The crack of all the school;
Said he, "I'll win the crown all right,
Bring in your bucking mule."

The elephant went off his trunk,
The monkey played the fool,
And all the band got blazing drunk
When Dacey rode the mule.

But soon there rose a galling shout
Of laughter, for the clown
From somewhere in his pants drew out
A little paper crown.
He placed the crown on Dacey's head
While Dacey looked a fool;
"Now, there's your crown, my lad," he said,
"For riding of the mule!"

The band struck up with "Killaloe",
And "Rule Britannia, Rule",
And "Young Man from the Country", too,
When Dacey rode the mule.

Then Dacey, in a furious rage,
For vengeance on the show
Ascended to the monkeys' cage
And let the monkeys go;
The blue-tailed ape and chimpanzee
He turned abroad to roam;
Good faith! It was a sight to see
The people step for home.

For big baboons with canine snout
Are spiteful, as a rule --
The people didn't sit it out
When Dacey rode the mule.

And from the beasts that made escape,
The bushmen all declare,
Were born some creatures partly ape
And partly native-bear.
They're rather few and far between,
The race is nearly spent;
But some of them may still be seen
In Sydney Parliament.

And when those legislators fight,
And drink, and act the fool,
Just blame it on that torrid night
When Dacey rode the mule.

The Mylora Elopement

By the winding Wollondilly where the weeping willows weep,
And the shepherd, with his billy, half awake and half asleep,
Folds his fleecy flocks that linger homewards in the setting sun,
Lived my hero, Jim the Ringer, "cocky" on Mylora Run.

Jimmy loved the super's daughter, Miss Amelia Jane McGrath.
Long and earnestly he sought her, but he feared her stern papa;
And Amelia loved him truly -- but the course of love, if true,
Never yet ran smooth or duly, as I think it ought to do.

Watching with his slow affection once Jim saw McGrath the boss
Riding out by Jim's selection, looking for a station 'oss
That was running in the ranges with a mob of outlaws wild.
Old McGrath "Good day" exchanges -- off goes Jim to see his child;

Says, "The old man's after Stager, which he'll find is no light job,
And to-morrow I will wager he will try and yard the mob.
Will you come with me to-morrow? I will let the parson know,
And for ever, joy or sorrow, he will join us here below.

"I will bring my nags so speedy, Crazy Jane and Tambourine,
One more kiss -- don't think I'm greedy -- good-bye, lass, before I'm seen --
Just one more -- God bless you, dearie! Don't forget to meet me here,
Life without you is but weary; now, once more, good-bye, my dear."

.

The daylight shines on figures twain
That ride across Mylora plain,
Laughing and talking -- Jim and Jane.
"Steadily, darling. There's lots of time,
Didn't we slip the old man prime!
I knew he'd tackle that Bowneck mob,
I reckon he'll find it too big a job.
They've beaten us all. I had a try,
But the warrigal devils seem to fly.
That Sambo's a real good bit of stuff
No doubt, but not quite good enough.
He'll have to gallop the livelong day,
To cut and come, to race and stay.
I hope he yards 'em, 'twill do him good;
To see us going I don't think would."
A turn in the road and, fair and square,
They meet the old man standing there.
"What's up?" "Why, running away, of course,"
Says Jim, emboldened. The old man turned,

His eye with wild excitement burned.
"I've raced all day through the scorching heat
After old Bowneck: and now I'm beat.
But over that range I think you'll find
The Bowneck mob all run stone-blind.
Will you go and leave the mob behind?
Which will you do? Take the girl away,
Or ride like a white man should to-day,
And yard old Bowneck? Go or stay?"
Says Jim, "I can't throw this away,
We can bolt some other day, of course,
Amelia Jane, get off that horse.
Up you get, Old Man. Whoop, halloo.
Here goes to put old Bowneck through!"
Two distant specks on the mountain side,
Two stockwhips echoing far and wide.
Amelia Jane sat down and cried.

.

"Sakes, Amelia, what's up now?
Leading old Sambo, too, I vow,
And him dead beat. Where have you been?
"Bolted with Jim! What DO you mean?"
"Met the old man with Sambo licked
From running old Bowneck." "Well, I'm kicked --
Ran 'em till Sambo nearly dropped?
What did Jim do when you were stopped?
Did you bolt from father across the plain?
Jim made you get off Crazy Jane!
And father got on, and away again
The two of 'em went to the ranges grim.
Good boy, Jimmy! Well done, Jim!
They're sure to get them now, of course,
That Tambourine is a spanking horse.
And Crazy Jane is good as gold.
And Jim, they say, rides pretty bold;
Not like your father, but very fair.
Jim will have to follow the mare."
"It never was yet in father's hide
To best my Jim on the mountain-side.
Jim can rally, and Jim can ride."
But here again Amelia cried.

.

The sound of a whip comes faint and far,
A rattle of hoofs, and here they are,
In all their tameless pride.
The fleet wild horses snort with fear,
And wheel and break as the yard draws near.
Now, Jim the Ringer, ride!
Wheel 'em! wheel 'em! Whoa back there, whoa!

And the foam-flakes fly like the driven snow,
As under the whip the horses go
Adown the mountain side.
And Jim, hands down, and teeth firm set,
On a horse that never has failed him yet,
Is after them down the range.
Well ridden! well ridden! they wheel -- whoa back!
And long and loud the stockwhips crack,
Their flying course they change,
"Steadily does it -- let Sambo go!
Open those sliprails down below.
Smart! or you'll be too late.
They'll follow old Sambo up -- look out!
Wheel that black horse -- give Sam a clout.
They're in! Make fast the gate."

.

The mob is safely in the yard!
The old man mounts delighted guard.
No thought has he but for his prize.
Jim catches poor Amelia's eyes.
"Will you come after all? the job is done,
And Crazy Jane is fit to run
For a prince's life -- now don't say no;
Slip on while the old man's down below
At the inner yard, and away we'll go.
Will you come, my girl?" "I will, you bet,
We'll manage this here elopement yet."

.

By the winding Wollondilly stands the hut of Ringer Jim.
And his loving little Meely makes a perfect god of him.
He has stalwart sons and daughters, and, I think, before he's done,
There'll be numerous "Six-fortys" taken on Mylora run.

The Pannikin Poet

There's nothing here sublime,
But just a roving rhyme,
Run off to pass the time,
With nought titanic in
The theme that it supports,
And, though it treats of quarts,
It's bare of golden thoughts --
It's just a pannikin.

I think it's rather hard
That each Australian bard --
Each wan, poetic card --
With thoughts galvanic in
His fiery soul alight,
In wild aerial flight,
Will sit him down and write
About a pannikin.

He makes some new-chum fare
From out his English lair
To hunt the native bear,
That curious mannikin;
And then when times get bad
That wandering English lad
Writes out a message sad
Upon his pannikin:

"Oh, mother, think of me
Beneath the wattle tree"
(For you may bet that he
Will drag the wattle in)
"Oh, mother, here I think
That I shall have to sink,
There ain't a single drink
The water-bottle in."

The dingo homeward hies,
The sooty crows uprising
And caw their fierce surprise
A tone Satanic in;
And bearded bushmen tread
Around the sleeper's head --
"See here -- the bloke is dead!
Now where's his pannikin?"

They read his words and weep,
And lay him down to sleep
Where wattle-branches sweep,
A style mechanic in;
And, reader, that's the way
The poets of to-day
Spin out their little lay
About a pannikin.

Not on It

The new chum's polo pony was the smartest pony yet --

The owner backed it for the Cup for all that he could get.
The books were laying fives to one, in tenners; and you bet
He was on it.

The bell was rung, the nags came out their quality to try,
The band played "What Ho! Robbo!" as our hero cantered by,
The people in the Leger Stand cried out, "Hi, Mister, Hi!
Are you on it?"

They watched him as the flag went down; his fate is quickly told --
The pony gave a sudden spring, and off the rider rolled.
The pony finished first all right, but then our hero bold
Was not on it.

The Protest

I say 'e ISN'T Remorse!
'Ow do I know?
Saw 'im on Riccarton course
Two year ago!
Think I'd forget any 'orse?
COURSE 'e's The Crow!

Bumper Maginnis and I,
After a "go",
Walkin' our 'orses to dry,
I says, "Hello!
What's that old black goin' by?"
Bumper says "Oh!
That's an old cuddy of Flanagan's --
Runs as The Crow!"

Now they make out 'e's Remorse.
Well, but I KNOW.
Soon as I came on the course
I says "'Elo!
'Ere's the old Crow."
Once a man's seen any 'orse,
'Course 'e must know.
Sure as there's wood in this table,
I say 'e's The Crow.

(Cross-examined by the Committee.)

'Ow do I know the moke
After one sight?
S'posin' you met a bloke
Down town at night,

Wouldn't you know 'im again when you met 'im?
That's 'IM all right!

What was the brand on 'is 'ide?
I couldn't say,
Brands can be transmogrified.
That ain't the way --
It's the LOOK of a 'orse and the way that 'e moves
That I'd know any day.

What was the boy on 'is back?
Why, 'e went past
All of a minute, and off down the track.
-- "The 'orse went as fast?"
True, so 'e did! But, my eyes, what a treat!
'Ow can I notice the 'ands and the seat
Of each bumble-faced kid of a boy that I meet?
Lor! What a question to ast!

(Protest dismissed.)

The Scapegoat

We have all of us read how the Israelites fled
From Egypt with Pharaoh in eager pursuit of 'em,
And Pharaoh's fierce troop were all put "in the soup"
When the water rolled softly o'er every galoot of 'em.
The Jews were so glad when old Pharaoh was "had"
That they sounded their timbrels and capered like mad.
You see he was hated from Jordan to Cairo --
Whence comes the expression "to buck against faro".

For forty long years, 'midst perils and fears
In deserts with never a tramline to follow by,
The Israelite horde went roaming abroad
Like so many sundowners out on the wallaby.
When Moses, who led 'em, and taught 'em, and fed 'em,
Was dying, he murmured "A rorty old hoss you are:
I give you command of the whole of the band" --
And handed the Government over to Joshua.

.

But Moses told 'em before he died,
"Wherever you are, whatever betide,
Every year as the time draws near
By lot or by rote choose you a goat,
And let the high priest confess on the beast

The sins of the people, the worst and the least.
Lay your sins on the goat! Sure the plan ought to suit yer,
Because all your sins are "his troubles" in future.
Then lead him away to the wilderness black
To die with the weight of your sins on his back:
Of thirst let him perish alone and unshriven,
For thus shall your sins be absolved and forgiven!"

'Tis needless to say, though it reeked of barbarity,
This scapegoat arrangement gained great popularity.
By this means a Jew, whate'er he might do,
Though he burgled, or murdered, or cheated at loo,
Or meat on Good Friday (a sin most terrific) ate,
Could get his discharge, like a bankrupt's certificate.
(Just here let us note -- DID THEY CHOOSE THEIR BEST GOAT?
It's food for conjecture; to judge from the picture
By Hunt in the Gallery close to our door, a
Man well might suppose that the scapegoat they chose
Was a long way from being their choicest Angora.
In fact I should think he was one of their weediest;
'Tis a rule that obtains, no matter who reigns,
When making a sacrifice, offer the seediest;
Which accounts for a theory known to my hearers
Who live in the wild by the wattle beguiled,
That a "stag" makes quite good enough mutton for shearers.)
Be that as it may, as each year passed away,
A scapegoat was led to the desert and freighted
With sin (the poor brute must have been overweighted)
And left there -- to die as his fancy dictated.

.

The day it has come; with trumpet and drum,
With pomp and solemnity fit for the tomb,
They led the old billy-goat off to his doom:
On every hand a reverend band,
Prophets and preachers and elders stand
And the oldest rabBI, with a tear in his eye,
Delivers a sermon to all standing by.
(We haven't his name -- whether Cohen or Harris, he
No doubt was the "poisonest" kind of a Pharisee.)
The sermon was marked by a deal of humility
And pointed the fact, with no end of ability,
That being a Gentile's no mark of gentility,
And, according to Samuel, would certainly d--n you well.
Then, shedding his coat, he approaches the goat
And, while a red fillet he carefully pins on him,
Confesses the whole of the Israelites' sins on him.
With this eloquent burst he exhorts the accurst --
"Go forth in the desert and perish in woe,
The sins of the people are whiter than snow!"
Then signs to his pal for to let the brute go.

The animal, freed from all restraint
Lowered his head, made a kind of a feint,
And charged straight at that elderly saint.
So fierce his attack, and so very severe, it
Quite floored the Rabbi, who, ere he could fly,
Was rammed on the -- no, not the back -- but just near it.
The scapegoat he snorted, and wildly cavorted,
A light-hearted antelope "out on the ramp",
Then stopped, looked around, got the "lay of the ground",
And made a bee-line back again to the camp.
The elderly priest, as he noticed the beast
So gallantly making his way to the East,
Says he: "From the tents may I never more roam again
If that there old billy-goat ain't going home again.
He's hurrying, too! This never will do.
Can't somebody stop him? I'm all of a stew.
After all our confessions, so openly granted,
He's taking our sins back to where they're not wanted.
We've come all this distance salvation to win agog,
If he takes home our sins -- it'll burst up the Synagogue!"

He turned to an Acolyte making his bacca light,
A fleet-footed youth who could run like a crack o' light.
"Run, Abraham, run! Hunt him over the plain,
And drive back the brute to the desert again.
The Sphinx is a-watching, the Pyramids frown on you,
From those granite tops forty cent'ries look down on you --
Run, Abraham, run! I'll bet half-a-crown on you."
So Abraham ran; like a man did he go for him,
But the goat made it clear each time he drew near
That he had what the racing men call "too much toe" for him.

The crowd with great eagerness studied the race --
"Great Scott! isn't Abraham forcing the pace --
And don't the goat spiel? It is hard to keep sight on him,
The sins of the Israelites ride mighty light on him.
The scapegoat is leading a furlong or more,
And Abraham's tiring -- I'll lay six to four!
He rolls in his stride; he's done, there's no question!"
But here the old Rabbi brought up a suggestion.
("Twas strange that in racing he showed so much cunning),
"It's a hard race," said he, "and I think it would be
A good thing for someone to take up the running."
As soon said as done, they started to run --
The priests and the deacons, strong runners and weak 'uns
All reckoned ere long to come up with the brute,
And so the whole boiling set off in pursuit.
And then it came out, as the rabble and rout
Streamed over the desert with many a shout --
The Rabbi so elderly, grave, and patrician,
Had been in his hot youth a bold metalician,
And offered, in gasps, as they merrily spieled,
"Any price Abraham! Evens the field!"

Alas! the whole clan, they raced and they ran,
And Abraham proved him an "even-time" man,
But the goat, now a speck they could scarce keep their eyes on,
Stretched out in his stride in a style most surprisin'
And vanished ere long o'er the distant horizon.

Away in the camp the bill-sticker's tramp
Is heard as he wanders with paste, brush, and notices,
And paling and wall he plasters them all,
"I wonder how's things gettin' on with the goat," he says,
Then pulls out his bills, "Use Solomon's Pills":
"Great Stoning of Christians! To all devout Jews! you all
Must each bring a stone -- Great sport will be shown;
Enormous Attractions! And prices as usual!
Roll up to the Hall!! Wives, children, and all,
For naught the most delicate feelings to hurt is meant!"
Here his eyes opened wide, for close by his side
Was the scapegoat devouring the latest advertisement!
One shriek from him burst -- "You creature accurst!"
And he ran from the spot like one fearing the worst.
His language was chaste, as he fled in his haste,
But the goat stayed behind him -- and "scoffed up" the paste.

With downcast head, and sorrowful tread,
The people came back from the desert in dread.
"The goat -- was he back there? Had anyone heard of him?"
In very short order they got plenty word of him,
In fact as they wandered by street, lane and hall,
"The trail of the serpent was over them all."
A poor little child knocked out stiff in the gutter
Proclaimed that the scapegoat was bred for a "butter".
The billsticker's pail told a sorrowful tale,
The scapegoat had licked it as dry as a nail;
He raced through their houses, and frightened their spouses,
But his latest achievement most anger arouses,
For while they were searching, and scratching their craniums,
One little Ben Ourbed, who looked in the flower-bed,
Discovered him, eating the Rabbi's geraniums.

Moral:

The moral is patent to all the beholders --
Don't shift your own sins on to other folk's shoulders;
Be kind to dumb creatures and never abuse them,
Nor curse them nor kick them, nor spitefully use them;
Take their lives if needs must -- when it comes to the worst,
But don't let them perish of hunger or thirst.
Remember, no matter how far you may roam,
That dogs, goats, and chickens, it's simply the dickens
Their talent stupendous for "getting back home".
Your sins, without doubt, will aye find you out,
And so will a scapegoat, he's bound to achieve it --

But, die in the wilderness? Don't you believe it!

An Evening in Dandaloo

It was while we held our races --
Hurdles, sprints and steeplechases --
Up in Dandaloo,
That a crowd of Sydney stealers,
Jockeys, pugilists and spiliers
Brought some horses, real heelers,
Came and put us through.

Beat our nags and won our money,
Made the game by no means funny,
Made us rather blue;
When the racing was concluded,
Of our hard-earned coin denuded
Dandaloonies sat and brooded
There in Dandaloo.

.

Night came down on Johnson's shanty
Where the grog was no means scanty,
And a tumult grew
Till some wild, excited person
Galloped down the township cursing,
"Sydney push have mobbed Macpherson,
Roll up, Dandaloo!"

Great St. Denis! what commotion!
Like the rush of stormy ocean
Fiery horsemen flew.
Dust and smoke and din and rattle,
Down the street they spurred their cattle
To the war-cry of the battle,
"Wade in, Dandaloo!"

So the boys might have their fight out,
Johnson blew the bar-room light out,
Then, in haste, withdrew.
And in darkness and in doubting
Raged the conflict and the shouting,
"Give the Sydney push a clouting,
Go it, Dandaloo!"

Jack Macpherson seized a bucket,
Every head he saw he struck it --

Struck in earnest, too;
And a man from Lower Wattle,
Whom a shearer tried to throttle,
Hit out freely with a bottle,
There in Dandaloo.

Skin and hair were flying thickly,
When a light was fetched, and quickly
Brought a fact to view --
On the scene of the diversion
Every single, solid person
Come along to help Macpherson --
ALL were Dandaloo!"

When the list of slain was tabled,
Some were drunk and some disabled,
Still we found it true.
In the darkness and the smother
We'd been belting one another;
Jack Macpherson bashed his brother
There in Dandaloo.

So we drank, and all departed --
How the "mobbing" yarn was started
No one ever knew --
And the stockmen tell the story
Of that conflict fierce and gory,
How we fought for love and glory
Up in Dandaloo.

It's a proverb now, or near it --
At the races you can hear it,
At the dog-fights, too!
Every shrieking, dancing drover
As the canines topple over
Yells applause to Grip or Rover,
"Give him 'Dandaloo'!"

And the teamster slowly toiling
Through the deep black country, soiling
Wheels and axles, too,
Lays the whip on Spot and Banker,
Rouses Tarboy with a flanker --
"Redman! Ginger! Heave there! Yank her!
Wade in, Dandaloo!"

A Ballad of Ducks

The railway rattled and roared and swung
With jolting carriage and bumping trucks.
The sun, like a billiard red ball, hung
In the Western sky: and the tireless tongue
Of the wild-eyed man in the corner told
This terrible tale of the days of old,
And the party that ought to have kept the ducks.

"Well, it ain't all joy bein' on the land
With an overdraft that'd knock you flat;
And the rabbits have pretty well took command;
But the hardest thing for a man to stand
Is the feller who says 'Well, I told you so!
You should ha' done this way, don't you know!' --
I could lay a bait for a man like that.

"The grasshoppers struck us in ninety-one
And what they leave -- well, it ain't 'de luxe'.
But a growlin' fault-findin' son of a gun
Who'd lent some money to stock our run --
I said they'd eaten what grass we had --
Says he, 'Your management's very bad,
You had a right to have kept some ducks!'

"To have kept some ducks! And the place was white!
Wherever you went you had to tread
On grasshoppers guzzlin' day and night;
And when with a swoosh they rose in flight,
If you didn't look out for yourself they'd fly
Like bullets into your open eye
And knock it out of the back of your head.

"There isn't a turkey or goose or swan,
Or a duck that quacks, or a hen that clucks,
Can make a difference on a run
When a grasshopper plague has once begun;
'If you'd finance us,' I says, 'I'd buy
Ten thousand emus and have a try;
The job,' I says, 'is too big for ducks!

"You must fetch a duck when you come to stay;
A great big duck -- a Muscovy toff --
Ready and fit,' I says, 'for the fray;
And if the grasshoppers come our way
You turn your duck into the lucerne patch,
And I'd be ready to make a match
That the grasshoppers eats his feathers off!

"He came to visit us by and by,
And it just so happened one day in Spring
A kind of a cloud came over the sky --
A wall of grasshoppers nine miles high,
And nine miles thick, and nine hundred wide,

Flyin' in regiments, side by side,
And eatin' up every living thing.

"All day long, like a shower of rain,
You'd hear 'em smackin' against the wall,
Tap, tap, tap, on the window pane,
And they'd rise and jump at the house again
Till their crippled carcasses piled outside.
But what did it matter if thousands died --
A million wouldn't be missed at all.

"We were drinkin' grasshoppers -- so to speak --
Till we skimmed their carcasses off the spring;
And they fell so thick in the station creek
They choked the waterholes all the week.
There was scarcely room for a trout to rise,
And they'd only take artificial flies --
They got so sick of the real thing.

"An Arctic snowstorm was beat to rags
When the hoppers rose for their morning flight
With a flapping noise like a million flags:
And the kitchen chimney was stuffed with bags
For they'd fall right into the fire, and fry
Till the cook sat down and began to cry --
And never a duck or a fowl in sight!

"We strolled across to the railroad track --
Under a cover, beneath some trucks,
I sees a feather and hears a quack;
I stoops and I pulls the tarpaulin back --
Every duck in the place was there,
No good to them was the open air.
'Mister,' I says, 'There's your blanky ducks!'"

Tommy Corrigan

(Killed, Steeplechasing at Flemington.)

You talk of riders on the flat, of nerve and pluck and pace,
Not one in fifty has the nerve to ride a steeplechase.
It's right enough while horses pull and take their fences strong,
To rush a flier to the front and bring the field along;
But what about the last half-mile, with horses blown and beat --
When every jump means all you know to keep him on his feet?

When any slip means sudden death -- with wife and child to keep --
It needs some nerve to draw the whip and flog him at the leap --

But Corrigan would ride them out, by danger undismayed,
He never flinched at fence or wall, he never was afraid;
With easy seat and nerve of steel, light hand and smiling face,
He held the rushing horses back, and made the sluggards race.

He gave the shirkers extra heart, he steadied down the rash,
He rode great clumsy boring brutes, and chanced a fatal smash;
He got the rushing Wymlet home that never jumped at all --
But clambered over every fence and clouted every wall.
But ah, you should have heard the cheers that shook the members' stand
Whenever Tommy Corrigan weighed out to ride Lone Hand.

They were, indeed, a glorious pair -- the great upstanding horse,
The gamest jockey on his back that ever faced a course.
Though weight was big and pace was hot and fences stiff and tall,
"You follow Tommy Corrigan" was passed to one and all.
And every man on Ballarat raised all he could command
To put on Tommy Corrigan when riding old Lone Hand.

But now we'll keep his memory green while horsemen come and go,
We may not see his like again where silks and satins glow.
We'll drink to him in silence, boys -- he's followed down the track
Where many a good man went before, but never one came back.
And let us hope in that far land where shades of brave men reign,
That gallant Tommy Corrigan will ride Lone Hand again.

The Maori's Wool

~Now, this is just a simple tale to tell the reader how
They civilised the Maori tribe at Rooti-iti-au.~

.

The Maoris are a mighty race -- the finest ever known;
Before the missionaries came they worshipped wood and stone;
They went to war and fought like fiends, and when the war was done
They pacified their conquered foes by eating every one.
But now-a-days about the pahs in idleness they lurk,
Prepared to smoke or drink or talk -- or anything but work.
The richest tribe in all the North in sheep and horse and cow
Were those who led their simple lives at Rooti-iti-au.

'Twas down to town at Wellington a noble Maori came,
A Rangatira of the best, Rerenga was his name --
(The word Rerenga means a "snag" -- but until he was gone
This didn't strike the folk he met -- it struck them later on).
He stalked into the Bank they call the "Great Financial Hell",
And told the Chief Financial Fiend the tribe had wool to sell.

The Bold Bank Manager looked grave -- the price of wool was high.
He said, "We'll lend you what you need -- we're not disposed to buy.
You ship the wool to England, Chief! -- You'll find it's good advice,
And meanwhile you can draw from us the local market price."
The Chief he thanked him courteously and said he wished to state
In all the Rooti-iti tribe his mana would be great,
But still the tribe were simple folk, and did not understand
This strange finance that gave them cash without the wool in hand.
So off he started home again, with trouble on his brow,
To lay the case before the tribe at Rooti-iti-au.

They held a great korero in the Rooti-iti clan,
With speeches lasting half a day from every leading man.
They called themselves poetic names -- "lost children in a wood";
They said the Great Bank Manager was Kapai -- extra good!
And so they sent Rerenga down, full-powered and well-equipped,
To draw as much as he could get, and let the wool be shipped;
And wedged into a "Cargo Tank", full up from stern to bow,
A mighty clip of wool went Home from Rooti-iti-au.

It was the Bold Bank Manager who drew a heavy cheque;
Rerenga cashed it thoughtfully, then clasped him round the neck;
A hug from him was not at all a thing you'd call a lark --
You see he lived on mutton-birds and dried remains of shark --
But still it showed his gratitude, and, as he pouched the pelf,
"I'll haka for you, sir," he said, "in honour of yourself!"
The haka is a striking dance -- the sort they don't allow
In any place more civilised than Rooti-iti-au.

He "haka'd" most effectively -- then, with an airy grace
Rubbed noses with the Manager, and vanished into space.
But when the wool-return came back, ah me, what sighs and groans!
For every bale of Maori wool was loaded up with stones!
Yes -- thumping great New Zealand rocks among the wool they found;
On every rock the Bank had lent just seven pence a pound.
And now the Bold Bank Manager, with trouble on his brow,
Is searching vainly for the chief from Rooti-iti-au.

The Angel's Kiss

An angel stood beside the bed
Where lay the living and the dead.

He gave the mother -- her who died --
A kiss that Christ the Crucified

Had sent to greet the weary soul
When, worn and faint, it reached its goal.

He gave the infant kisses twain,
One on the breast, one on the brain.

"Go forth into the world," he said,
"With blessings on your heart and head,

"For God, who ruleth righteously,
Hath ordered that to such as be

"From birth deprived of mother's love,
I bring His blessing from above;

"But if the mother's life He spare
Then she is made God's messenger

"To kiss and pray that heart and brain
May go through life without a stain."

The infant moved towards the light,
The angel spread his wings in flight.

But each man carries to his grave
The kisses that in hopes to save
The angel or his mother gave.

Sunrise on the Coast

Grey dawn on the sand-hills -- the night wind has drifted
All night from the rollers a scent of the sea;
With the dawn the grey fog his battalions has lifted,
At the call of the morning they scatter and flee.

Like mariners calling the roll of their number
The sea-fowl put out to the infinite deep.
And far over-head -- sinking softly to slumber --
Worn out by their watching, the stars fall asleep.

To eastward, where resteth the dome of the skies on
The sea-line, stirs softly the curtain of night;
And far from behind the enshrouded horizon
Comes the voice of a God saying "Let there be light."

And lo, there is light! Evanescent and tender,
It glows ruby-red where 'twas now ashen-grey;
And purple and scarlet and gold in its splendour --
Behold, 'tis that marvel, the birth of a day!

The Reveille

Trumpets of the Lancer Corps,
Sound a loud reveille;
Sound it over Sydney shore,
Send the message far and wide
Down the Richmond River side --
Boot and saddle, mount and ride,
Sound a loud reveille.

Whither go ye, Lancers gay,
With your bold reveille?
O'er the ocean far away
From your sunny southern home,
Over leagues of trackless foam,
In a foreign land to roam
With your bold reveille.

When we hear our brethren call,
Sound a clear reveille.
Then we answer, one and all,
Answer that the world may see,
"Of the English stock are we,
At their side we still will be" --
That's our bold reveille.

[End of original text.]

[Original Advertisement]

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[End Original Advertisement]

About the author:

Andrew Barton Paterson was born on 17 February 1864 at Narambla, New South Wales. He lived at Illalong station until he was ten, when he went to Sydney to attend school. He trained as a solicitor (a type of lawyer) but also contributed some verse to the Sydney "Bulletin" under the pseudonym of "The Banjo", taken from the name of a horse. His first book, "The Man from Snowy River", was published in 1895, and has sold more copies than any other book of Australian poetry. He later gave up law to become a journalist, and went to South Africa to report on the Boer War. When World War I broke out he sought work as a war correspondent, but failed to get it. He then went to work driving an ambulance in France, and later became a Remount Officer with the Australian forces then in Egypt. After returning to Australia in 1919 he continued as a writer, and died in Sydney on 5 February 1941.

Paterson's most famous work is "Waltzing Matilda", written in 1895, and now an unofficial anthem of Australia. "The Man from Snowy River" has since become the inspiration for a well-known movie of the same name, and even a series on a cable television network. "Clancy of the Overflow" is similarly well known.

An incomplete Glossary of Australasian and obscure terms:

Billabong: A waterhole that dries up during the dry season.

Billy: A kettle used for camp cooking, especially to boil water for tea.

Box: When referring to plants, it can be any of a number of trees and shrubs, especially those of genus *Buxus* or genus *Eucalyptus*.

Cocky/cockatoo: A small-time farmer.

Coolabah: (more often Coolibah) *Eucalyptus microtheca*.

The leaves of the *Eucalyptus* hang sideways, with the narrow edge to the sun, as an adaptation to drought. Hence they are famous for not providing shade.

Edward Rex: (Rex = King) Edward VII, 1841-1910, King of the United Kingdom (and therefore nominal head of state in Australia) from 1901 to 1910.

Fi. fa.: fieri facias -- a legal paper authorising the seizure of a debtor's goods.

Flash: Ostentatious; fake; (obsolete) relating to shady characters.

Gully-raker: A person who musters unbranded cattle (or horses).

Humpy: (Aboriginal) A rough or temporary hut or shelter in the bush, especially one built from bark, branches, and the like.
A gunyah, wurley, or mia-mia.

Jumbuck: A sheep.

Korero: (Maori) a discussion, meeting, etc.

Leichhardt, Ludwig [1813-1848?]: Prussian-born Australian explorer, his last expedition (in 1848) never returned.

Matilda: A swag. See "Waltz Matilda".

Mob: When referring to animals, a group or herd.

Myall: An Aborigine living according to tradition; wild;
any of several types of wattle trees (genus *Acacia*).

Native bear: A koala.

Overland: (Historical) A route by land, especially for driving stock, and especially a route from New South Wales to South Australia; to drive stock by land, especially on this route.

Overlander: One who travels or drives stock overland.

Paddy-melon/paddymelon/pademelon: One of several species of wallabies, of the genus *Thylogale*.

Pah/Pa: A Maori village.

Pannikin: A small pan; also (colloquial), self-important.

Push: Any group of people sharing something in common; a gang.

Rangatira: (Maori) a lord, chief, boss, etc.

Ringer: When speaking of shearing sheep, the fastest shearer in the group.

Saltbush: Any of a number species of the family *Chenopodiaceae*, especially of genus *Atriplex* and of genus *Rhagodia*, the latter of which is limited to Australia and New Zealand. Used as a grazing crop, saltbush can grow in arid, saline, or alkaline conditions;

the region where saltbush grows.

Selector: A free selector, a farmer who selected and settled land by lease or license from the government.

Shout: To buy a round of drinks.

Squatter: A person who first settled on land without government permission, and later continued by lease or license, generally to raise stock; a wealthy rural landowner.

Station: A farm or ranch, especially one devoted to cattle or sheep.

Sturt, Charles [1795-1869]: Indian-born Australian explorer, explored eastern Australia, his explorations led to the discovery of the river system in southeastern Australia.

Sundowner: (Historical) A swagman who arrives at a place too late for work, but looking for food and/or shelter.

Swag: A bundle or roll of bedding and other personal items.

Swagman: A man who travels from place to place looking for work, e.g. carrying a swag.

Tucker: Food.

Wallaby: One of a number of marsupial species of the genus *Wallabia*, etc., related to the kangaroo, but smaller; (colloquial) "on the wallaby (track)", on the move, on the road.

Waltz Matilda: To wander with a swag. "Waltz", to travel in circles.

Warrigal: Originally the dingo, or native dog of Australia; by association, anything wild; brumbies (wild horses).

Water-bag/waterbag: A bag for carrying water, usually canvas.

Wattle: Any of a number of shrubs or trees of the genus *Acacia*, having off-white or yellow flowers. So named because the branches were used to weave wattle, a type of construction made of interwoven branches and the like.

Wombat: Any of several species of burrowing marsupials, family *Vombatidae*, which vaguely resemble small bears; (colloquial) an ignorant person.

Yarran: A small tree, *Acacia homalophylla*, also the bastard myall, *A. glaucescens*.

Notes on the text:

"An Answer to Various Bards" appeared 10 Oct. 1892 as one of a series of poems in the Sydney 'Bulletin', debating what life in the bush was like, or, the city versus the bush (according to the interpretation), primarily between A. B. Paterson and Henry Lawson [1867-1922], who may have staged the debate as a way of selling more poems.

Other writers joined the debate, including Edward Dyson [1865-1931], who, despite Paterson's remark in this poem, also favoured the bush in at least one poem. Another noted participant was Will Ogilvie [1869-1963] who was in Australia during the 1890's (born in Scotland, returned in 1901, and was in Iowa, U.S.A, from 1905 to 1907).

Other verses from the debate maybe found in "The Man from Snowy River" by Paterson and "In the Days When the World was Wide" by Henry Lawson.

The second stanza was mistakenly broken into two equal parts in the original edition.

"'Shouting' for a Camel": A number of camels were brought to Australia, with their Afghan handlers, in order to have suitable beasts of burden in the desert regions. There are still wild camels there today. (A similar scheme was tried in America during the 1800's, but no camels remain.)

"The Gundaroo Bullock":

[Said Morgan, "Tis the carcass of an old man native bear.]
changed to:
[Said Morgan, "'Tis the carcass of an old man native bear.]

"Lay of the Motor-Car": To put this poem in perspective, it must be remembered that this book was published in 1917, and the poem written earlier. It may be helpful to compare Paterson's short story, "Three Elephant Power", in the book of the same name that was published in the same year. The plot centres around a speed demon who would drive at unspeakable speeds, even up to 45 MPH! (About 72 Km/H.)

"The Mylora Elopement":

[No thought has be but for his prize.]
changed to:
[No thought has he but for his prize.]

"The Protest":

[W II, but I KNOW.]

changed to:
[Well, but I KNOW.]

"The Maori's Wool":

[In any place more civilised that Rooti-iti-au.]
changed to:
[In any place more civilised than Rooti-iti-au.]

"The Lost Drink", "The Matrimonial Stakes", "Not on It", "The Scapegoat", "The Angel's Kiss", and "The Reveille" were all dropped from "Saltbush Bill" when it was included in Paterson's "Collected Verse" (first issued in 1921). No poems were added, though "The Song of the Pen" moved from the front of the book to the back, and several titles were slightly changed. No effort has been made to compare the texts.

There was no Table of Contents in the original trench-edition; one was added.

Omitted from the original are the index (to Paterson's first 3 books) and the "frontispiece and vignette by Lionel Lindsay", the first of which was set above the lines:

"But when the dawn makes pink the sky
And steals across the plain,
The Brumby horses turn and fly
Towards the hills again."

which is a (mis)quote of the fourth stanza of "Brumby's Run" (should be "steals along the plain").

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g the plain").

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